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ABSTRACT

This report evaluated the Advanced Reading Development Program designed to enrich reading instruction for 360 junior high school students in New York City who were reading two or more years below grade level. Students received individualized reading instruction for four forty-five minute periods per week. Students were pre tested in October, 1975 and post tested at the end of March 1976. As a result of participation in the more advanced reading development program, seventh graders achieved a mean reading grade growth of 8.2 months, eighth graders achieved a mean reading grade growth of .11 months, and ninth graders achieved a mean reading grade growth of .26 months. The report concluded that students in the program did progress beyond their recorded entrance achievement. However, only the seventh graders progressed beyond their expected achievement scores. (Author/JP)

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EVALUATION REPORT

Function No. 20-63423

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MORE ADVANCED READING DEVELOPMENT

1975-76 School Year

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Dr. James Weiss

An Evaluation of Selected New York City Umbrella Programs funded under a Special Grant of the New York State Legislature performed for the Board of Education of the City of New York for the 1975-76 school year.

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CHAPTER I. THE PROGRAM

The More Advanced Reading Development program is designed to serve the needs of junior high school pupils whose reading ability is two or more years below grade level, based on their most recent city-wide reading test.

The thrust of this program is enriched reading instruction for approximately 360 students in J.H.S. 118, Manhattan, who will be programmed for four forty-five minute periods of individualized reading instruction per week. Instruction and supervision will be conducted by licensed tax-levy teachers and a MARD teacher, assisted by trained paraprofessionals. The program was scheduled to begin September 1, 1975, and end June 30, 1976. Pretesting of subjects was to be conducted in October, 1975, and post-testing at the end of March, 1976.

CHAPTER II. EVALUATIVE PROCEDURES

Evaluation Objective #1: To determine, if as a result of participation in the MARD project, the reading grade of pupils attending 70% or more of the scheduled program sessions would show a statistically significant difference between the real posttest scores and the anticipated post-test scores.

The city-wide reading test was administered in October 1975, as a pretest; a different form of the same test was administered on March 30, 1976, and served to posttest students in the program. 322 students took the posttest; 374 took the pretest. Discharges, excessive absences and rescheduling accounted for the diminished numbers of posttest scores.

Evaluation Objective #2: To determine the extent to which the program, as actually carried out, coincided with the program as described in project proposal.

The following activities were conducted by the evaluator in order to accurately estimate whether the program as carried out was consistent with its description in the Proposal:

1. Visits were made three times to each of the classes in which the MARD program was operating.
2. Several liaison meetings were held with the project coordinator.
3. Interviews were conducted with each of the paraprofessionals assigned to the program.
4. Interviews were conducted with the school principal and the reading coordinator of the school.

CHAPTER III. FINDINGS

Evaluation Objective #1: To determine if, as a result of participation in the MARD project, the reading grade of pupils attending 70% or more of the scheduled program sessions would show a statistically significant difference between the real posttest scores and the anticipated posttest scores.

As a result of participation in the More Advanced Reading Development Project (MARD), the mean reading grade of 7th graders did show a statistically significant difference between actual posttest and predicted posttest mean scores at the .01 level.

Posttest scores for the 8th and 9th graders did show a gain over pretest scores; these gains, however, were not statistically significant. These data are reported in the following table.

SUMMARY TABLE

CITY-WIDE READING RESULTS MARD PROJECT 1975-76

Group	Number Tested Pre/Post		Pretest Date	Pretest Mean	Predicted Posttest Mean	Actual Posttest Date	Actual Posttest Mean	Obtained Value of t
7	99	84	10/75	4.69	5.01	3/76	5.51	4.39*
8	132	116	10/75	5.49	5.80	3/76	5.60	1.46
9	143	122	10/75	5.80	6.06	3/76	5.96	.69

*Significance at .01 level

An inspection of the data in the Summary Table reveals the following:

1. For the 7th grade the pretest mean score was 4.69, the predicted posttest mean score was 5.01 and the actual posttest mean score was 5.51. Therefore, the 7th graders achieved a mean growth of 8.2 months and exceeded the predicted score by 5.0 months.

2. For the 8th grade the pretest mean score was 5.49, the predicted posttest mean was 5.80 and the actual posttest mean was 5.60. Therefore, the 8th graders scored a mean growth of .11 months but did not match their predicted posttest mean score.

3. For the 9th grade the pretest mean was 5.80, the predicted posttest mean was 6.06 and the actual posttest mean was 5.96. Therefore, the 9th graders scored a mean growth of .26 months but did not match their predicted posttest mean score.

A possible explanation which can account for the positive performance of the 7th grade may be due to the fact that they are housed in an annex separate from the main school which houses the 8th and 9th grades. Although the investigator could discern no substantive difference between the two buildings, the annex being smaller offers its 7th graders an intimate atmosphere more supportive of reading laboratory work on a remedial basis.

Evaluation Objective #2: To determine the extent to which the program as carried out was consistent with its description in the Proposal.

Duration, Enrollment and Attendance: The program served the stipulated number of students (374) who were reading at least two years below grade level. Placement tests, oral reading tests and questionnaires were administered to insure correct diagnosis, placement on working levels and prescriptions.

On the average, students were enrolled for four periods of instruction a week in addition to their regularly scheduled period of English instruction. Because of late notification of funding and difficulties in assigning qualified personnel, program activities did not begin until the latter part of October, 1975. It is scheduled to continue through June, 1976.

Analysis of randomly selected attendance records from a number of project students indicated that the students attended reading development centers at least as frequently as they attended their other classes and it seems that they cut their reading classes less frequently than the general student population cut theirs.

Supplies, Materials and Equipment: In most instances three levels of individualized self-pacing reading material were provided in abundance to meet the needs of students at

different levels of reading proficiency. In evidence were a multiplicity of individualized reading programs including: Globe Book's Mini Units in Reading, Open Ended Stories, SRA Reading Kits, Lippincott's Reading for Meaning, Scope magazine, teacher prepared skill sheets, etc. Classroom facilities were judged to be more than adequate with large airy rooms amply stocked to be the rule.

Project Activities: In nearly all of the classes observed the teachers and the educational assistants worked skillfully and seemed to be highly supportive of their students. The paraprofessionals were highly trained and were involved in collegiate preparation for teaching degrees. Most had attended workshops in reading and were desirous of doing more work on reading correction at the collegiate level.

Accurate records were kept of the progress of each student and individual file folders were maintained in special cabinets and checked periodically to insure that pupil progress was stimulated. Classes were orderly and productive; they started on time and teaching personnel had little trouble in motivating their students to work productively.

Program Administration: In spite of a late start, the MARD teacher showed exemplary leadership qualities. In addition to her teaching duties, the MARD teacher also took responsibility for coordinatin the activities of the other MARD

reading classes. These responsibilities were judged to be excellently administered and the person assigned to this project demonstrated a high degree of competence and ability. Close coordination was maintained between program supervisors and school administration. Credit needs to be given to the school principal and the school reading coordinator for abetting the smooth functionin of the NARD program.

Prior Recommendation: The following recommendations were made in the last prior published study of this program; they are followed by the present evaluator's comments:

1. "In the above class the fourteen students who were present were working together in a Scope Skills Book. This methodology was also present in a class of twenty-seven in the annex. I do not believe that this is an acceptable remedial reading methodology. A more definite, detailed diagnostic/prescriptive approach seems necessary to me."

   Comment: Individualized diagnostic/prescriptive approach was implemented

2. "The NARD program functions in both the main school and the annex with the scheduling such that that the teachers must travel between the two buildings which is quite a distance. I should think that a better schedule could be worked out assigning teachers to only one building."

   Comment: To a large degree scheduling difficulties have been obviated and there is much less travel time wasted by participating teachers in commuting between the schools.

3. "The average NARD class size is approximately twenty-five registered students. Given the poor disciplinary situation within the school and the degree of retardation of the participating students, I would recommend that the

class be reduced by at least ten students or that two or three rather than one, well trained, paras be assigned to one teacher.

Comment: Rescheduling of classes has reduced class size.

4. "There should be an attendance requirement for eligibility for MARD. There is no sense running a program for students who are absent for a large percentage of it."

Comment: Attendance has improved significantly over prior findings.

CHAPTER IV: SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of the major findings: The major findings of this evaluation are:

1. The students in the MARD program did progress beyond their recorded entrance achievement. However, only the 7th graders progressed beyond their expected achievement.

2. The MARD program implementation coincided to a very high extent with the program as described in the Project Proposal. With the exception of the late hiring of some key personnel, the MARD program had the benefit of consistent and superior leadership.

3. The abundant instructional materials and equipment were instrumental in making the MARD program a learning center which was both interesting and attractive for the students.

4. The MARD program classroom facilities in general were very satisfactory.

Conclusions: The major conclusions of this evaluation are:

1. The MARD program is designed as a success experience for students. The program is provided in a non-threatening manner and is an excellent model which indicates that many of the students who have a history of academic failure may be reached.

2. The individualized "laboratory" approach to remedial reading manned by instructional teams is an effective modality to reach retarded readers.

Recommendations: The following recommendations are offered:

1. Retain the present emphasis on the small class, individualized format of MARD program.

2. Budget some funds which will permit the replenishing of keys, answer sheets, and other expendable and usable materials.

3. Retain, if possible, the leadership of this present supervisor of the program.

4. Continue and, if possible, expand the MARD program because it is an excellent approach to provide a dynamic educational program for servicing the needs of the target population.